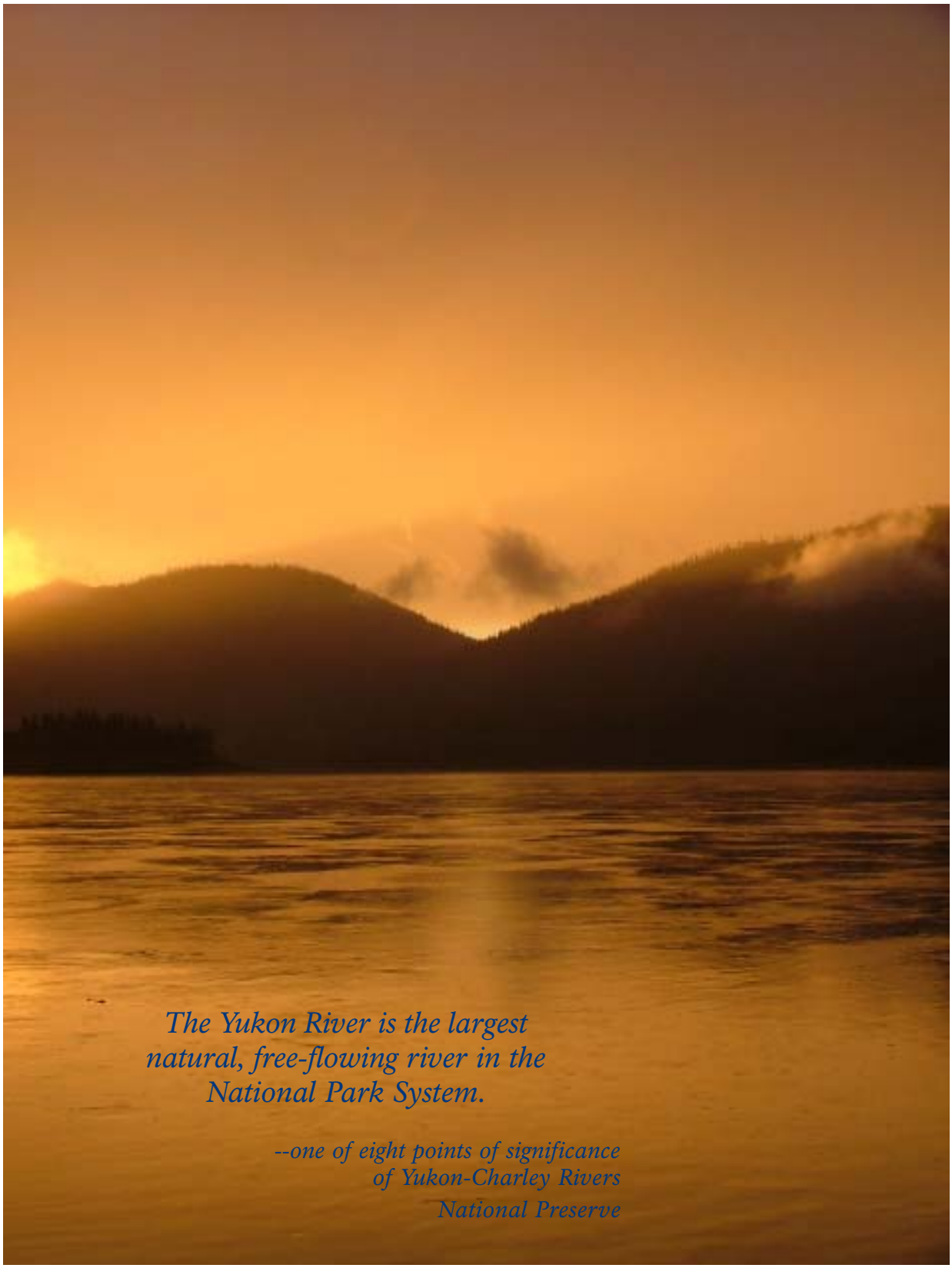
**Annual Report 2010**

# Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

National Park Service
Department of the Interior


*The Yukon River is the largest natural, free-flowing river in the National Park System.*

*--one of eight points of significance of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve*

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by the National Park Service unless noted otherwise.


Cover photo: The 2010 Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve archeology crew enjoys the view while surveying along a ridgeline near the Nation River.

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# *Purpose and Significance*

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve protects 115 miles of the 1,800-mile Yukon River and the entire Charley River basin. Rustic cabins and historic sites are reminders of the importance of the Yukon River during the 1898 gold rush. Paleontological and archeological sites add much to our knowledge of the environment thousands of years ago. Peregrine falcons nest in high bluffs overlooking the river, while rolling hills that make up the Preserve are home to an abundant array of wildlife. The Charley, a 100-mile wild river, is considered to be one of the most spectacular rivers in Alaska.

## Purpose of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

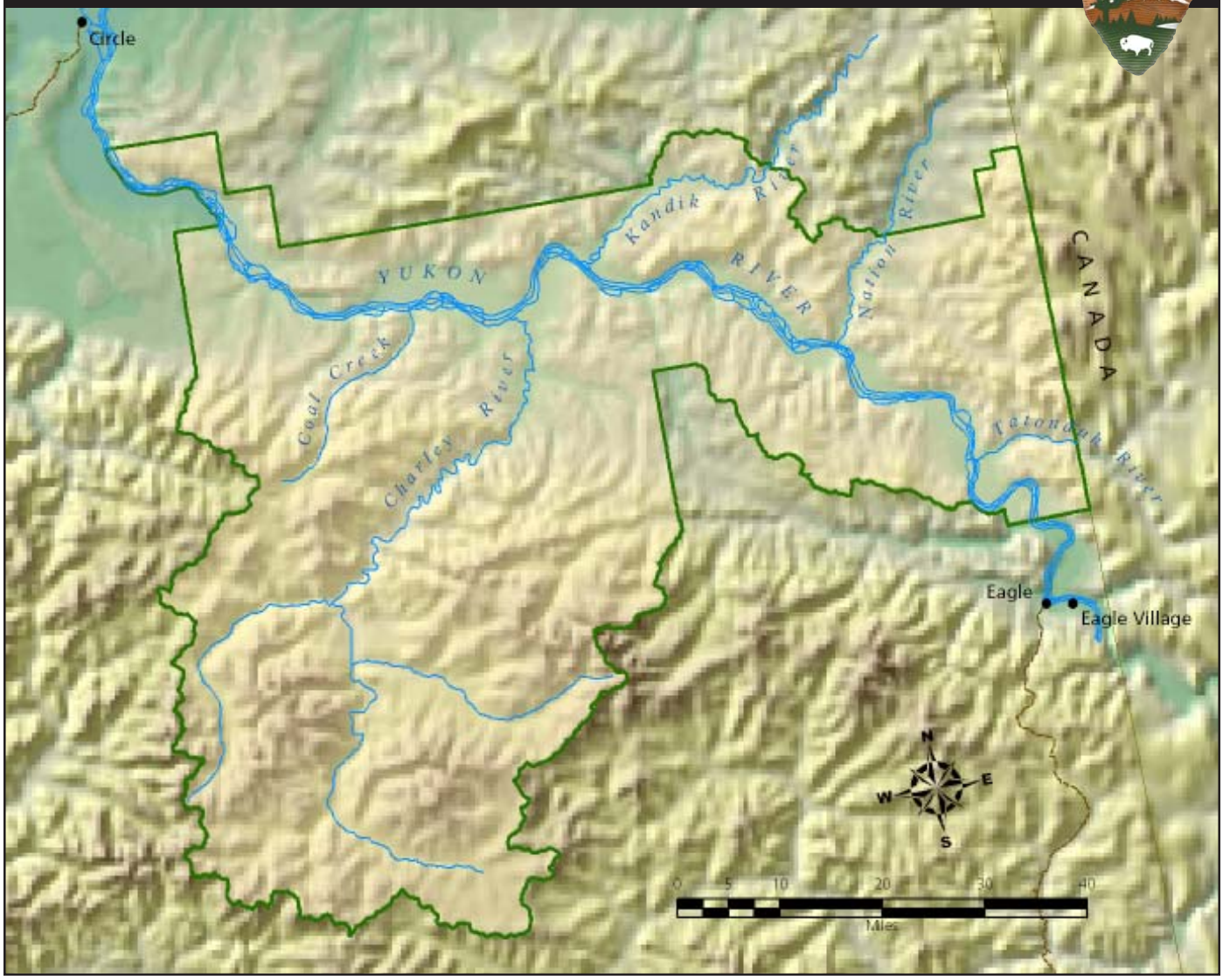
- Maintain environmental integrity of entire Charley River basin, including streams, lakes, and other natural features, in undeveloped natural condition for public benefit and scientific study;
- Protect habitat for and populations of fish and wildlife, including but not limited to peregrine falcons and other raptorial birds, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, grizzly bears, and wolves;
- And in a manner consistent with foregoing, protect and interpret historical sites and events associated with the Yukon River gold rush, and geological and paleontological history, and cultural prehistory of area; and
- Protect, conserve, and interpret natural and cultural resources of the Preserve while allowing for appropriate human uses in a manner that provides for similar opportunities for future use and enjoyment.

## Significance of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

- An internationally significant assemblage of diverse geological and paleontological resources—unusually complete—provide at least a 600-million-year record stretching nearly back to the Precambrian era.
- The area between Nation, Kandik, and Yukon rivers is postulated to be a portion of the North American plate that has escaped deformation from geological forces, remaining geologically and paleontologically intact. Some of the oldest known microfossils have been found in this area.
- The entire Charley River watershed is protected in its undeveloped natural condition.
- The Preserve hosts one of the highest density populations of nesting American peregrine falcons in the United States.
- Portions of the Han and Kutchin Athabaskan traditional homelands lie within the Preserve.
- Sites preserving activities and events of regional significance associated with the gold rush era are present and exemplified by bucket dredges, mail trails, trapper's cabins, boats, roadhouses, water ditches, and machinery.
- The Yukon River is the largest natural, free-flowing river in the National Park System.
- Large areas within the Preserve may represent an unglaciated refugium for endemic floral and faunal communities.

# Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior




Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve lies in eastern interior Alaska, bordering Yukon Territory, Canada. The Taylor Highway will take visitors as far as Eagle, where the Preserve's field office and Visitor Center are located. Travellers into the Preserve typically float the Yukon River or charter a flight into the upper Charley River. We encourage visitors to file a travel plan in Eagle prior to their trip.

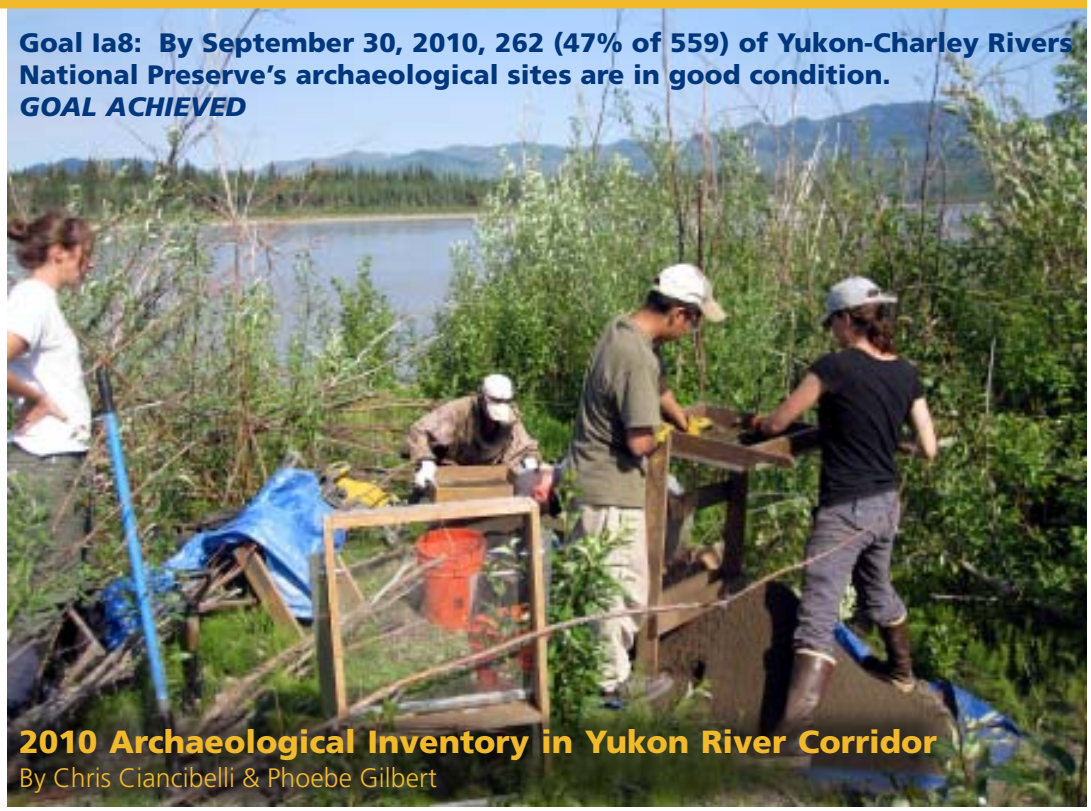
Within the Preserve, NPS staff maintain facilities including a public use cabin at Coal Creek Camp, which also serves as a base for many resource projects. At Slaven's Roadhouse on the Yukon, visitors may enjoy learning about the area's rich mining history.


Yukon-Charley Rivers lies in eastern interior Alaska, bordering Yukon Territory.

## *Preserve Resources*

*Natural and cultural resources and associated values at Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.*

**Goal Ia8: By September 30, 2010, 262 (47% of 559) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's archaeological sites are in good condition.**
***GOAL ACHIEVED***



NPS archeologists work with the help of volunteers to try to locate new sites on a flood-damaged terrace overlooking the Yukon River.

### 2010 Archaeological Inventory in Yukon River Corridor

By Chris Ciancibelli & Phoebe Gilbert

*Nine previously undiscovered archaeological sites were identified, one of which was likely exposed due to flood damage.*

Archaeological fieldwork in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve during summer of 2010 was limited to an investigation of the Yukon River corridor. The objectives of this project were to assess known archaeological sites along the river for damage incurred during the spring 2009 flooding event and to perform additional survey for new sites that may have been exposed as a result of erosion.

Two volunteers accompanied a crew of four NPS archaeologists for 18 days along the river. Thirty-two sites were revisited to perform condition assessments. The only prehistoric site to visibly sustain damage was Charley's Village, a turn-of-the-century Han Athapaskan village located near the mouth of the Kandik River, which was completely inundated and suffered erosion along the exposed river bank. The remainder of the sites relocated were above the high-water mark and escaped immediate impact, although they will continue to be monitored for future damage or loss caused by riverbank erosion. Nine previously undiscovered archaeological sites were identified, one of which was likely exposed due to flood damage. Finally, six subsurface sites were identified along the edge of Takoma Bluff. Fortunately, it appears as though the prehistoric archaeological resources along the Yukon River were not affected as severely as many of the historic sites were during the 2009 breakup.

High school students joined an archeological research team investigating the Juneby Cabin site near Snare Creek in the Coal Creek Historic Mining District of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The photo shows where floor joists were exposed during excavation of the kitchen area.

## Historic Archaeology and High School Students, Part 2

By Chris Houlette

Once again, an inter-agency research team, accompanied by six high school students conducted archaeological investigations at the Juneby Cabin site near Snare Creek in the Coal Creek Historic Mining District. The 2010 effort, carried out during the last two weeks of July, concluded the field based portion of the two-year project. Lab analysis of the excavated material is ongoing at the Archaeology Laboratory of the University of Alaska Museum of the North.

The students joined the team as part of the Alaska Summer Research Program, a "science camp" organized by the University of Alaska. Students' ages ranged from 15 to 18 and they hailed from such far flung places as Nome, Haines and even California. Following their successful completion of the program, each student acquired one college credit.

The 2010 excavations expanded on the testing efforts of the previous summer guided partly by a hand drawn map of the layout of the original cabin by Isaac Juneby, who accompanied the group in 2009. Mr. Juneby, a current resident of Eagle Village, lived at the site as a child before the cabin burned in the early 1950's. Using this information the crew delved deeper into what were said to have been the kitchen and sleeping areas of the cabin as well as excavating what appeared to be a subterranean storage pit.

These investigations have provided us with a fascinating window into a unique confluence in space and time where a traditional Han Athapaskan family lived on the edge of an industrial mining camp. Preliminary analysis of the artifacts shows an interesting mix of locally acquired and long distance import goods; including faunal remains of moose, caribou and bear in contrast with decorated ceramic china and various types of canned goods. Also of great interest was the large amount of toys discovered through the feature including marbles, wooden wheels (perhaps from toy cars or trains) and a Mickey Mouse mail plane.

*These investigations have provided us with a fascinating window into a unique confluence in space and time where a traditional Han Athapaskan family lived on the edge of an industrial mining camp.*

**Annual Goal Ia6: By September 30, 2010, 69 (95% of 73) applicable preservation and protection standards for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's museum collections are met.**
***GOAL EXCEEDED***

A steam point like those once used to thaw frozen ground in preparation for gold mining is among the 49,351 items catalogued in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's museum collections.

This part of a rifle found on the dredge tailings in the Coal Creek Historic Mining District is also among the Preserve's collections.

## Building Partnerships; a view of the new Yukon-Charley museum program

By Chris Houlette

In the past year, the museum collections for Yukon-Charley Rivers have experienced a few changes. Going by the numbers, 4,981 items were cataloged bringing the total number of items to 49,351. This compares to 170 items cataloged in 2009. To facilitate this sort of growth, two additional adjustments were made: a full time curator was hired to manage the collections, and a state-of-the-art compact storage system was installed to better house them.

While a portion of the new additions to the collections were the result of recent field activities, the majority was related to backlogged collections currently held at University of Alaska Museum of the North (UAMN). Through a collaborative effort between NPS and UAMN staff, a total of 2,308 herbarium specimens and 1,052 paleontology specimens were identified and added to the YUCH museum database. Work continues in these and other UAMN departments to further identify and process YUCH collections held there.

Ideally, a museum is more than a repository where objects are simply stored and counted. Toward this end, Yukon-Charley staff participated in a youth summer research event through the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For two weeks in July, several cultural resource professionals, including NPS Curator Chris Houlette, led a group of six teenagers through an excavation in the Coal Creek Historic Mining District in Yukon-Charley, where they learned the basics of field collecting, processing and analysis of archaeological materials. The collections that were generated from this are being processed at the University of Alaska Museum and will eventually be housed at the Fairbanks Administrative Center curation facility.

## Central Alaska Network Builds Vegetation Monitoring Database

By Maggie MacCluskie

During the 2010 field season the vegetation crew worked at 4 sampling sites including Funnel Creek, Joseph Creek, Nation Islands and the mouth of the Nation River. Across the 4 sampling sites 64 vegetation plots were completed. The data from the plots have been entered and error checked. Data summarization is currently taking place. For the coming summer the vegetation sampling will be on hiatus as analyses and syntheses of the data collected thus far are completed.

*The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.*

**Goal Ia2B: By September 30, 2010, 4 populations (40% of 10) of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve's species of management concern are managed to desired condition or have improved information to contribute to their management.**
***GOAL ACHIEVED***

## Furbearer Track Counts: Pilot Study Continues

By John Burch

In January and early February 2010 NPS conducted the second effort at developing a way to monitor furbearers in Yukon-Charley Rivers by counting tracks in the snow on the Charley River. Wildlife Biologist John Burch and Ranger Seth McMillan traveled over 460 miles by snowmachine, from Circle into the upper Charley River and Crescent Creek and back, counting and mapping all the furbearer tracks seen. We were also able to ground truth the Crescent Creek snow marker.

Conditions were excellent in the Charley River and Crescent Creek with good soft snow, but the snow was wind blown on most of the Yukon. Results are still preliminary with little to compare to, but lynx, marten and wolverine appeared common. There were, however, only 3 fox tracks seen. The hope is for this survey to be repeated annually and perhaps expanded in the future to include other major drainages in the preserve.

The survey was cut short this year due to a mechanical failure of the cooling system on one snowmachine and we were forced to abandon the survey in the lower part of the East Fork of the upper Charley (3-Finger area), and limp the crippled snowmachine back to Coal Creek and then Circle. A field repair good enough to continue the survey was not possible.

A lynx track crossing the Charley River, February, 2010.

*lynx, marten and wolverine appeared common*

## Wolf Population Monitoring Continues for 17th Year

By John Burch

Wolf populations have been monitored in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve since March 1993. In October 2005, the project was incorporated into Central Alaska Network's vital signs monitoring program.

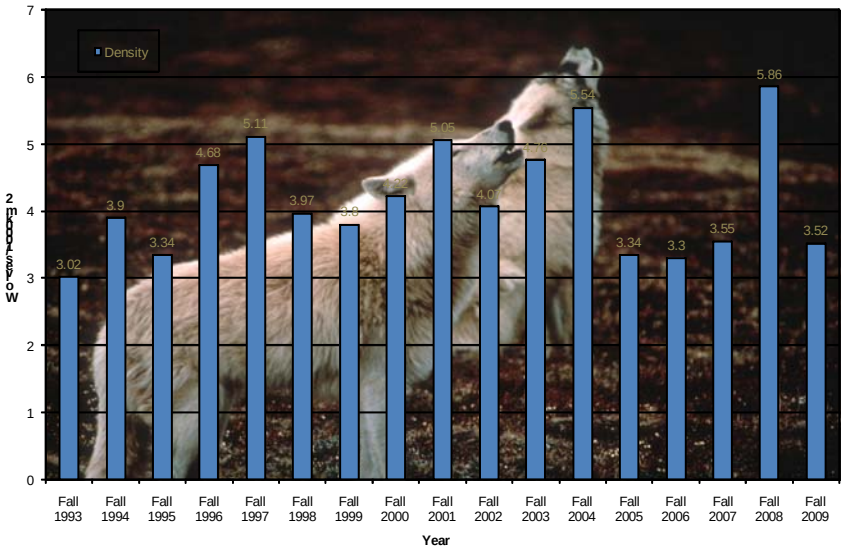
Wolves throughout the greater Yukon-Charley Rivers area are monitored for abundance and distribution. Wolf captures were conducted in November 2009 and February 2010. Monitoring radio-collared packs via radio telemetry flights occurred throughout the year with concentrated periods of flights in March – April and September – October.

Nine wolves in six packs were captured and collared in three areas in the winter of 2009-2010. The Nation River Pack was found and two wolves were collared in the group of six wolves. Also, two wolves from a group of four were found and collared in the Webber Creek area. No wolves could be found to capture in the Kandik drainage but tracks of at least four wolves were seen. The four Webber Creek wolves were shot and killed from a helicopter a month later by Alaska Department of Fish & Game during the State's wolf control effort after misunderstanding which wolves they were. ADF&G did avoid shooting at least three other packs of Preserve wolves which they identified by radiotelemetry in the same operation.

Currently, we are following 18 collared wolves in nine packs in the Preserve as part of the 17-year monitoring program. A structured decision-making model was used by Superintendent Greg Dudgeon to decide to temporarily close the sport hunting and trapping seasons in Yukon-Charley last spring, while keeping the subsistence harvest of wolves open. The decision was based on the fact that, although wolf density (number of wolves per unit area) appeared stable, the actual count of total number of wolves dropped 41%, from 52 wolves in the fall to 31 wolves by February, plus the added threat of more wolves with home ranges in the Preserve being killed in the State's wolf control program outside the Yukon-Charley boundary.

Wolves continue to prove their resiliency once again as our preliminary counts for fall 2010 show good pup production and survival in several packs, which might produce a higher than average Fall 2010 wolf density.

*Currently, we are following 18 collared wolves in nine packs in the preserve as part of the 17-year monitoring program.*




Fall wolf densities (wolves/1000 km$^2$) in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, 1993–2009.

## Yukon River Peregrine Survey

By Melanie Flamme

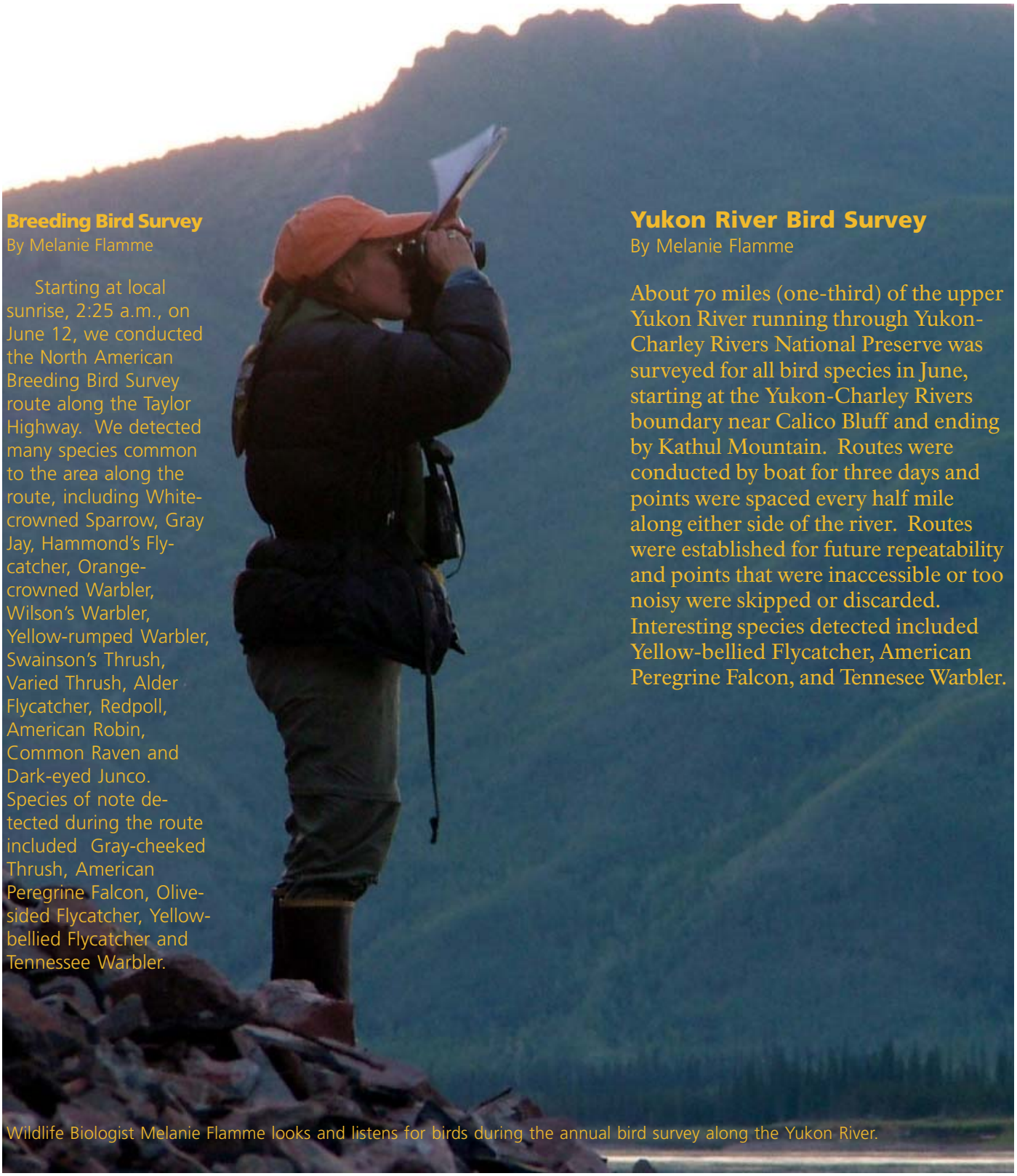
In the 265 km (165 miles) of the upper Yukon River surveyed for peregrines, 54 territories—the most ever—were recorded. Over 58% of the pairs were successful, producing 66 nestlings. New territories have recently been established on bluffs not previously used by peregrines in over 34 years of observations. This may be attributable to increased competition for resources due to increased density.

We also collected 5 eggs for contaminants analyses to assess the levels of persistent organic pollutants (e.g. DDT, and PCBs) and heavy metals (e.g. mercury and cadmium) present in peregrines on their wintering grounds.

A high-school student volunteer joined the peregrine falcon monitoring crew this year. The student spent 13 days in the field, working with and learning from experts about peregrine falcon biology and survey techniques, including peregrine falcon behavior and identification, data collection and scope and binocular use.

A peregrine falcon flies around its nest on the upper Yukon River while while a biologist (not seen in photo) climbs to the nest to check eggs. Peregrines are very protective and will dive at intruders near the nest.

Inset: Seasonal USFWS biological technician Emily Magnuson, NPS volunteer Julia Brice and NPS biolgist John Burch watch for peregrine falcons along a stretch of the upper Yukon River in July 2010.



## Breeding Bird Survey

By Melanie Flamme

Starting at local sunrise, 2:25 a.m., on June 12, we conducted the North American Breeding Bird Survey route along the Taylor Highway. We detected many species common to the area along the route, including White-crowned Sparrow, Gray Jay, Hammond's Flycatcher, Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, Varied Thrush, Alder Flycatcher, Redpoll, American Robin, Common Raven and Dark-eyed Junco. Species of note detected during the route included Gray-cheeked Thrush, American Peregrine Falcon, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Tennessee Warbler.

## Yukon River Bird Survey

By Melanie Flamme

About 70 miles (one-third) of the upper Yukon River running through Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was surveyed for all bird species in June, starting at the Yukon-Charley Rivers boundary near Calico Bluff and ending by Kathul Mountain. Routes were conducted by boat for three days and points were spaced every half mile along either side of the river. Routes were established for future repeatability and points that were inaccessible or too noisy were skipped or discarded. Interesting species detected included Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, American Peregrine Falcon, and Tennesee Warbler.

Wildlife Biologist Melanie Flamme looks and listens for birds during the annual bird survey along the Yukon River.

## Moose Survey Reveals Small but Significant Increase

By John Burch

In partnership with the Central Alaska Network, Yukon-Charley Rivers conducted an aerial moose survey in November 2009. Of the 3,000 square mile survey area stretching from Eagle to Circle along the Yukon River valley, 618 square miles was thoroughly searched via airplane for moose. We estimate a total population of 1,331 moose, or a density of 0.429 moose/mi$^2$.

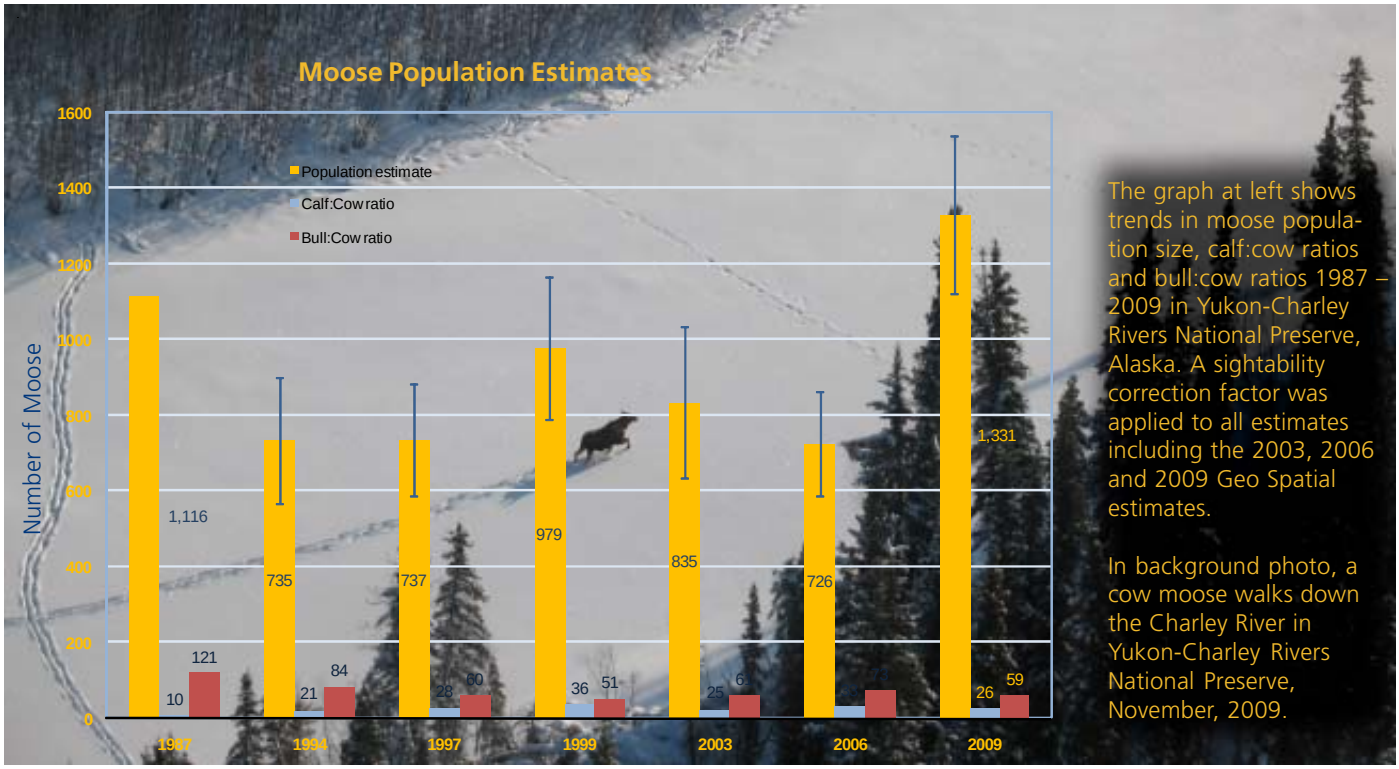
This is the 7$^{th}$ moose survey conducted in this area. The first one was in 1987. When comparing this survey to past surveys, we find we have a low density but stable or slightly increasing population of moose in the preserve. The 1987 and 1994 surveys were conducted a little differently and as a result are not directly comparable, but they give some idea of what was found then. The moose population is assumed to have increased from 2006 because the 2006 confidence limits (see graph below) do not overlap with 2009 confidence limits.

The harvest of moose within Yukon-Charley's boundary has averaged 26 bulls per year over the last 20 years. Because the bull:cow ratio is good, it is unlikely that human harvest of bulls is having any detrimental effects on the population. Some Alaskans think this region could support many more moose than currently exists and both the moose and caribou populations are limited by wolf and bear predation. No one knows for sure if this is correct, and no thorough studies have been conducted to measure the quantity and quality of moose browse in the preserve, nor its potential carrying capacity.

The information gathered by this study and the Central Alaska Network will be instrumental in allowing NPS managers to make informed science-based decisions regarding moose management in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

### The Statistics:

- Number of moose counted: 308 (164 cows, 42 calves [4 sets of twins], and 102 bulls [21 spike-fork or yearling bulls]).
- Total population: 1,331 moose, plus/minus 251.
- Density: 0.429 moose/mi$^2$, with 717 cows, 189 calves, and 425 bulls (86 yrl bulls).
- Population composition: 26 calves/100 cows, 27 yearlings/100 cows, and 59 bulls/100 cows.




The graph at left shows trends in moose population size, calf:cow ratios and bull:cow ratios 1987 – 2009 in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Alaska. A sightability correction factor was applied to all estimates including the 2003, 2006 and 2009 Geo Spatial estimates.

In background photo, a cow moose walks down the Charley River in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, November, 2009.

Both the Witch Mountain and Yukon Slough fires burned in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve during the month of June.

## Short and Slow Fire Season in 2010

By James Savage

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve had a short, slow fire season this year with only 4 fires burning 5,729 acres. The first fires of the year came as twins: the Witch Mountain and Yukon Slough fires. Due to its proximity to cabins, smokejumpers were dispatched to provide structure protection to the Nation Bluff cabin and other cabins threatened by the Yukon Slough Fire. The Witch Mountain fire burned 1,459 acres and the Yukon Slough 2,342 acres. Later, the Waterfall fire burned 1,573 acres and the Silvia Creek fire burned 355 acres in the Woodchopper prescribed fire unit. All of these fires were successfully managed with the help of our protection agency, the Alaska Fire Service; staff in Eagle also helped inform the public about the fires.

In addition to these wildfire accomplishments, Yukon-Charley had numerous fuels accomplishments. Project funds were used to bring a Wildland Fire Module up from South Dakota (the Black Hills WFM). Their 7-member crew plus our seasonal staff reduced hazardous fuels around structures in the Coal Creek and 4th of July Creek historical mining districts. The team thinned vegetation on 18 acres and created defensible space around seven structures.

Drying fish following a successful salmon season. (Photo courtesy of Jan Woodruff.)

## Subsistence, the Human Habitat

By Pat Sanders

There is an old expression in bush Alaska: "If you don't have it and you need it, you make it, catch it or, do without." This has never been truer than in the past two years for residents of the Yukon-Charley Rivers area. Following the devastating flood of 2009, the Taylor Highway leading into Eagle was closed for much of 2010, effectively cutting the area off from the rest of Alaska, save air travel. Though the residents of Circle and Central did not suffer the same fate, some activity was curtailed due to smoke from nearby wildfires. Since air freight costs are prohibitive for large grocery orders, most residents depended upon the area resources to fill their waning larders.

Subsistence activities became more vital during the 2010 season as residents in both areas concentrated efforts on catching fish during a fair salmon season.

Berry harvests were extraordinary, due in part to the moist summer season. Raspberries, blueberries and cranberries were found in abundance and most residents were grateful for the bounty as well as an exceptional mushroom season.

Fall hunting proved to be less profitable for most residents as fewer moose were harvested by those participating in subsistence lifestyles.

The winter trapping season showed a bountiful harvest in areas recovering from the 2004 and 2005 wildfires and trappers were able to show some profit in a reasonable fur market. Of particular note was the issue of wolf control. While several trappers had intended to harvest wolves, after the decline in wolf population due to the State of AK predator control program, and the closure to sport hunting, those involved in subsistence activities chose to refrain from any wolf trapping or hunting to assist in the effort to maintain a healthy wolf population.

Subsistence is not just a word.

*Since air freight costs are prohibitive for large grocery orders, most residents depended upon the area resources to fill their waning larders.*

# *Provide for the Public Enjoyment and Visitor Experience*

*Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of preserve facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.*

**Annual Goal IIa1A: By September 30, 2010, 94% of visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.**
***GOAL EXCEEDED***

## Rangers Patrol Preserve, Stock Supplies, Haul Trash, Educate Public...

By Scott Sample

The Division of Visitor and Resource Protection had a very active year in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. In February and March, rangers conducted winter patrols in conjunction with staffing Slaven's Roadhouse during the Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race. Winter patrols allowed rangers to contact several trappers, snowmobilers, and dog mushers, while stocking firewood and supplies at the public use cabins, backhauling non-cultural trash from remote locations and monitoring other preserve activity. During the summer, rangers patrolled over 1,000 miles on rivers and over land within the preserve, locating, documenting and mitigating human impacts; educating the public regarding preserve history and resources; maintaining public use cabins; assisting biologists with scientific studies; enforcing state and federal regulations to ensure visitor safety and resource protection; and responding to visitor assists when requested. Rangers and preserve pilots assisted state and other federal agencies in search and rescue operations along the Yukon River and its tributaries.


Ranger Bill Edwards, left, SCA volunteer Max Krupp, and Biologist Melanie Flamme coordinated efforts to remove fuel drums and other debris from the banks of the Yukon River. Once collected, trash is taken to Eagle or hauled to Fairbanks for proper disposal.

Before (above) and after. The Kandik River public use cabin was dislodged from its foundation during the 2009 Yukon River flood. The cabin was rebuilt in 2010, due in large part to the volunteer efforts of Eagle resident Don Woodruff.

## A Rewarding Kandik River Cabin Re-build Project

By Pat Sanders

Don Woodruff, a long time Eagle resident and subsistence permit holder, led the effort to rebuild the Kandik River Public Use Cabin in 2010. The cabin was moved approximately 30 feet from its former location by the tremendous force of the ice during the historic 2009 breakup of the Yukon River.

Don, along with preserve maintenance staff, worked approximately 6 weeks to restore the cabin to provide for visitor use and safety.

The cabin, which lies in a very scenic spot and is a favorite among hunters, visitors and residents of Eagle, Central and Circle, has been utilized as a public use cabin since 1985 and has become a favorite place to experience solitude and respite from inclement weather and the infamous mosquitoes of interior Alaska. The potential for the rebuild effort was thwarted by budget constraints until Don volunteered to lead the effort and salvage lumber and logs found in the area.

Visitors have already noted in the log book how much the repairs are appreciated. A Central resident commented that the cabin was better than ever and that the new door Don constructed was so much nicer than the previous door. Unlike the remainder of the public use cabins along the Yukon corridor, the Kandik Cabin is not a historic structure, so many restrictions that would normally be in place did not apply.

While Yukon-Charley staff assisted with the rebuild effort and were vital in the completion, the efforts of Don and his wife, Jan, were instrumental in overseeing the project and are truly an example of volunteerism and partnerships with neighbors at their very best.

*The potential for the rebuild effort was thwarted by budget constraints until Don volunteered to lead the effort and salvage lumber and logs found in the area.*

*Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.*

**Annual Goal IIb2: By September 30, 2010, 88% of visitors to Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve are satisfied with park facilitated programs.**
***GOAL EXCEEDED***

## What Happened After the Flood?

A Joint Project between Eagle Community School and the National Park Service

By Jen Mitchell

*New colonizing plants now occupy some areas where there was no vegetation in 2009.*

2010 marked the 6th year of the Eagle School field trip with NPS fire ecology and interpretative staff. The field trips are designed to explore how forests near the Eagle Community are recovering from fires and floods. We've watched the students and the forests grow!

In 2010, Eagle School joined NPS Staff for the second annual visit to flood effects plots on Belle Island. The plots were established in 2009, approximately 4 months after the May flood. This is what they learned:

Before the flood, the island was forested; afterward, all the mature trees were gone! Poplar saplings, which re-sprouted from roots of trees swept away in the flood, were much taller in 2010 than in 2009. New colonizing plants now occupy some areas where there was no vegetation in 2009.

Students noted areas where 1) there was still no vegetation, 2) herbaceous plants had colonized bare ground and 3) there were increased numbers and larger re-sprouting poplar trees, shrubs, and new grasses.

Why are post-flood plant communities important? Because colonizing plants provide:

- ✧ soil stabilization
- ✧ habitat for moose and hares
- ✧ nutrients needed for later successional forests (white spruce)

Before: In 2009, following the flood, there was only bare ground in places.

After: In 2010, there were herbaceous plants colonizing areas which had previously been bare ground.

## Influencing Lives and Creating Partnerships

By Pat Sanders

Another amazing opportunity occurred this year to reach out to students and teach them about the environment and the joys of just being outdoors. With the devastating road closures, the NPS took the opportunity to turn many frowns upside down and put some smiles on the faces of students.

The environmental education camp, in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference, was a 2-day camp where students participated in activities ranging from natural and cultural history to the future and capabilities of alternate power sources in the midst of climate change. Leave No Trace ethics, birding, identifying wild, edible and poisonous plants, solar powered oven construction, Athabascan Native history and archeological protection were a few of the varied topics covered.

Four rangers, the Tanana Chiefs Conference local representative and three local residents all pitched in to make the camp a success. Several students requested that the NPS sponsor the day camp multiple times during the 2011 season.

The two days culminated with the "swearing in" of 13 new Junior Rangers representing the NPS, topped off with an old fashioned hot dog roast, made over a LNT fire, of course!

*Leave No Trace ethics, birding, identifying wild plants, solar oven construction, Athabascan Native history and archeological protection were a few of the varied topics covered.*

Ranger Drew Bryenton shows students how to construct a solar powered oven to bake cookies using natural light.

# *Ensure Organizational Effectiveness*

*The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.*

## Park Facilities Maintenance and Construction

By Arch Thompson and Julia Youngblood

Success came in many areas for the YUGA maintenance staff during 2010. Our work ranged from rebuilding a cabin destroyed in the Yukon River flood to the day to day maintenance and operational work done on our far flung facilities. Here are the highlights.

- Completed the rebuild of the Kandik Public Use cabin that was destroyed in the 2009 flood of the Yukon River.
- Reviewed and updated the Park Asset Management Plans for Yukon-Charley Rivers.
- Improved our Asset Management Database information accuracy to 98.6% which resulted in YUGA winning the Alaska Region's award in that category.
- With the exception of remote cabins, we completed annual condition assessments for our assets. The only assets not inspected were those we were prevented from doing due to budgetary and administrative travel caps.
- Generated 853 repair and operational work orders in 2010 and showed completion of 345.
- Took ownership of a new seasonal housing unit in Eagle.
- Implemented a fleet accounting record system.
- Increased the fleet by 4 vehicles to meet our growing operational transportation needs.
- Employed two new permanent staff employees to replace two who had retired and added one new seasonal position in Eagle.

Seasonal maintenance worker Danny David sweeps the roof of the Coal Creek dredge.

## YUGA Green Team: Who We Are and What We Are Up To

By Julia Youngblood

The Green Team for YUGA (Yukon-Charley Rivers, Gates of the Arctic and the Fairbanks Administrative Center) is composed of 8 representatives from several divisions and the networks.

*Recycling.* This is our largest project at the Fairbanks Administrative Center (FAC) and field offices. We met with K&K Recycling in Fairbanks to see how we might be able to partner with them in our recycling program. A multi sectioned recycling container is out of the question for our lot, so we have obtained permission from the sustainability director at UAF to drop our plastics recycling in their bin until K&K bins are located in the University Avenue transfer station. We will continue to recycle cardboard, aluminum and mixed paper with the Fairbanks Rescue Mission.

Recycled in 2010:
3271 lbs aluminum, plastic, card board and mixed paper;
262 lbs lead acid batteries;
230 lbs alkaline batteries.

*Sustainable energy.* Another goal has been to participate in GVEA's SNAP (Sustainable Natural Alternative Power) program and to install moveable solar panels to supply power to the grid from the Fairbanks office. FAC will make monthly SNAP donations to support local alternative power source providers. A moveable photo voltaic (PV) system at FAC depends on future funding sources. At our field sites, alternative power is going strong. The PV system for the Bettles VC/office was repaired and on line for summer 2010, cutting in half the building's electrical costs. The wind turbine system for the Anaktuvuk Pass Ranger Station was brought on line summer 2010. Marion Creek/Coldfoot staff installed a meter on the housing PV system in order to better record and report alternative power generated. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds supported an energy audit for park facilities, which provided us with additional ideas for increasing energy efficiency.

*Alternative transportation.* The FAC participated in the annual "Don't Be Fuelish" campaign sponsored by the city of Fairbanks and the Northern Alaska Environmental Center. We bicycled, walked and car-pooled 11,141.8 miles instead of driving our cars, placing second in per capita miles recorded by all participating agencies or groups.

*Carbon offsets.* The Green Team is supporting the NPS Interpretive Division's Carbon Offset Sticker program. This program identifies a species at risk due to climate change and offers the visitor an opportunity to offset their travel with a sticker purchase. The Smith's Longspur is our species of concern for Gates of the Arctic NP&P. The YUGA's Green Team will continue striving to incorporate attainable sustainability goals in our work place through communication with our partners and staff.

## Admin Team Strives for Efficiency and Convenience to Users

By Monica Cross

*We started the year by tackling travel to provide more support... The change was an instant success among employees... (and) we were still able to process over 300 purchase requests and 253 personnel action requests, track over 200 account codes, in addition to answering phones, filing, processing mail, greeting visitors, and helping customers.*

FY 2010 came with more changes for Administration. Monica Cross became the official Administrative Officer in October. Being short staffed was rectified with the hiring of Administrative Assistants Susan Holly in January and Beth Patterson in February. This change in alignment allowed for new training opportunities and the refocusing of administrative duties. The goal was administrative cross-training and better overall support of all six organization codes with differing legislation under the Fairbanks Administrative Center mantel.

The Administrative Team supports the GPRA goals for Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center, the inventory and monitoring programs of Central Alaska and Arctic networks, and the Eastern Area Fire Management Program. The Administrative Team, in addition to the AO, two IT specialists, and five administrative assistants (4 in Fairbanks, 1 in Eagle), also receives help from the Arctic Network, Fire Program and Cultural program admin assistants, plus the interpretive ranger in Bettles.

We started the year by tackling travel to provide more support to employees by helping with input for Travel Authorizations and Vouchers. The change was an instant success among employees who had struggled with the constantly changing GovTrip program. While absorbing this additional workload, we were still able to accomplish the processing of over 300 purchase requests and 253 personnel action requests, tracking over 200 account codes, in addition to our daily tasks of answering phones, filing, processing mail, greeting visitors, and helping internal and external customers.

Our IT program has been outstanding. For eight years running we have had no successful virus attacks on our computer network. We are forward-looking and continue to be ahead of the curve in meeting new NPS/DOI security requirements. We are testing the new Server 2008 operating system and Symantec Endpoint Protection, version 11, before being required to move to this new system in the near future. Required encryption software was installed on 58 of our laptops in about three weeks this spring.

In looking for ways to give users what they need, we recently installed a DSL line into the FAC for users who need to communicate with partner entities outside the NPS network. We installed additional capacity in our data backup system and obtained new hardware to allow this system to run even faster than before. We also more than doubled the capacity of our GIS server. An upgrade to the data and electrical infrastructure of the FAC this year has enabled us to add workstations anywhere there is room for a desk and chair. The upgrade has also allowed us to relocate and add printers to make things more convenient for users.

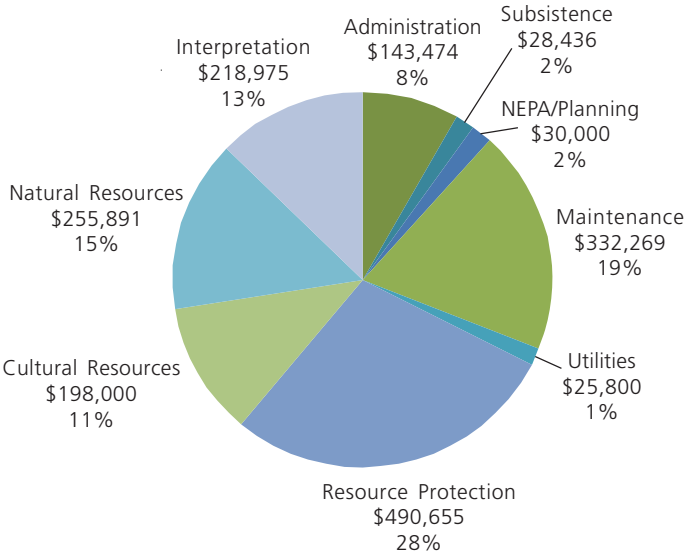
Administrative Assistant Beth Patterson cheerfully helps with everything from creating travel authorizations to ordering supplies and answering phones.

# *Financial Summary*

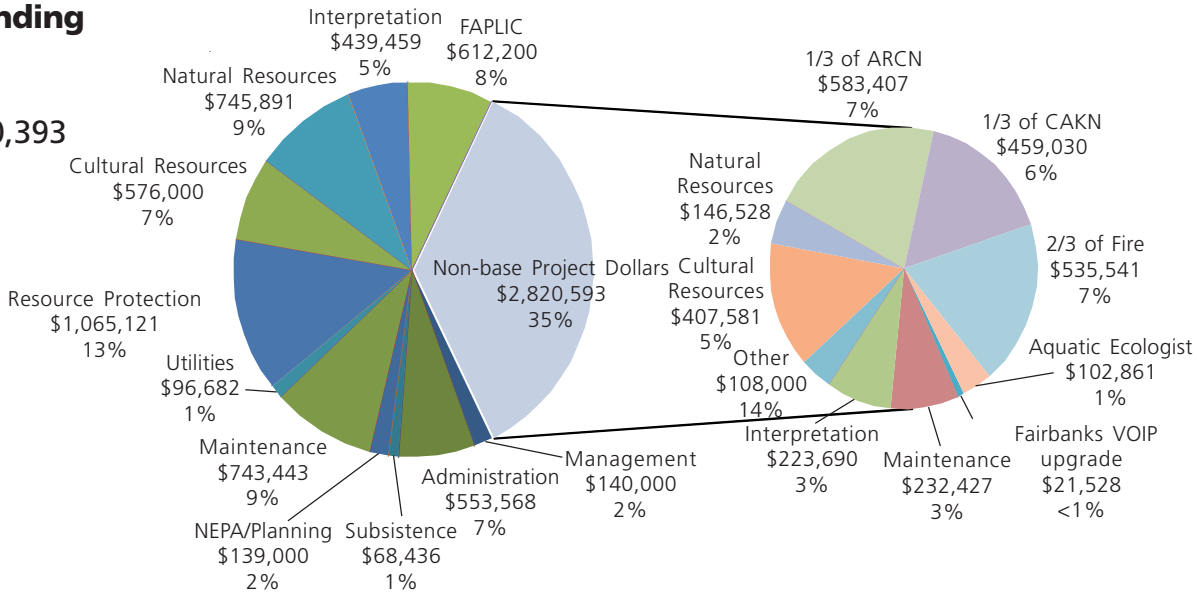
**Breakdown of Operating Budget Base Allocations (ONPS) by Division**

- ❖ Research & Studies: $512,327
- ❖ Facilities Operation & Maintenance: $358,069
- ❖ Resource Protection & Visitor Services: $709,630
- ❖ Management & Administration: $143,474

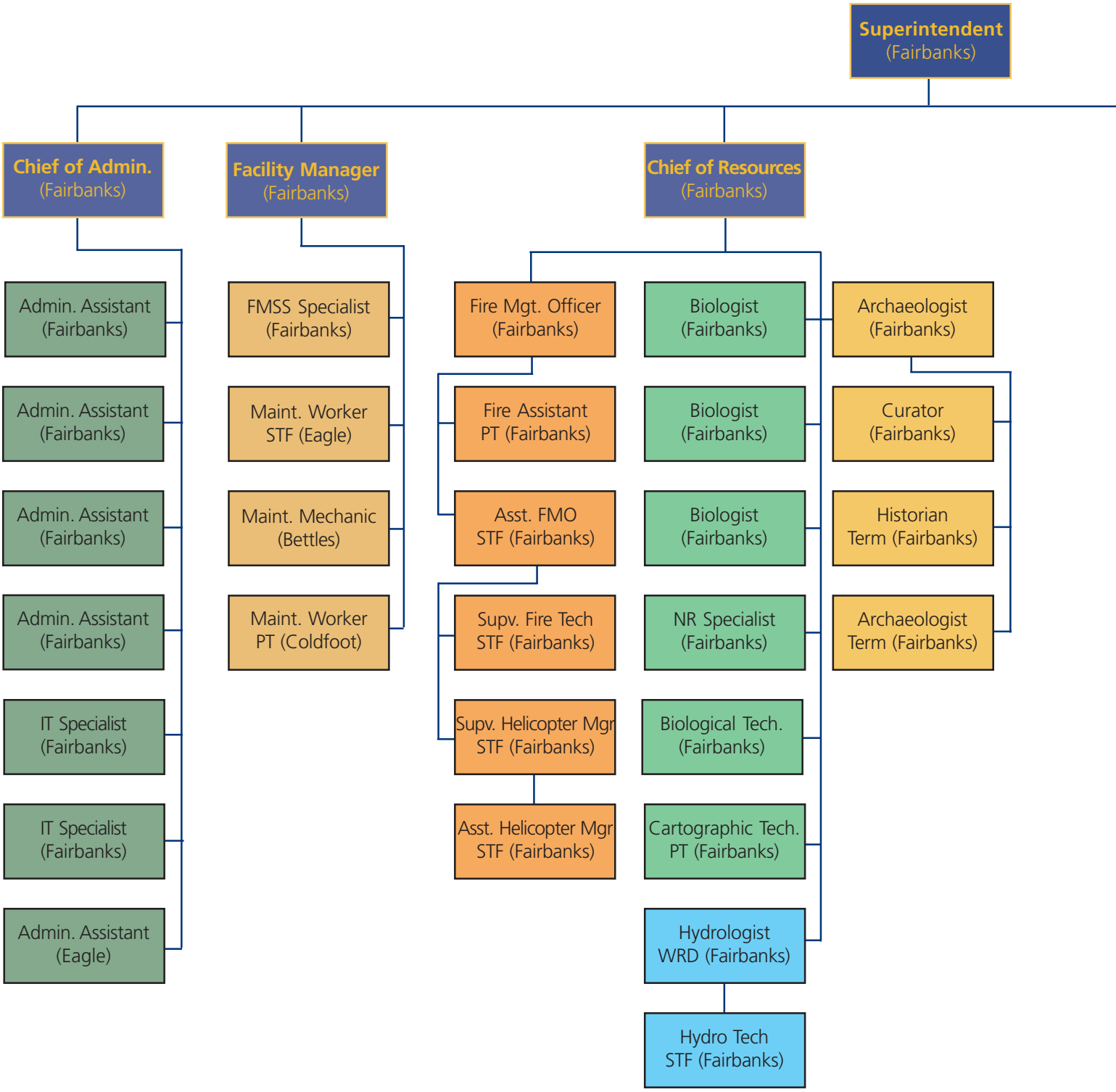
**Yukon-Charley Operating Budget Base Allocations (ONPS)**
Total = $1,723,500

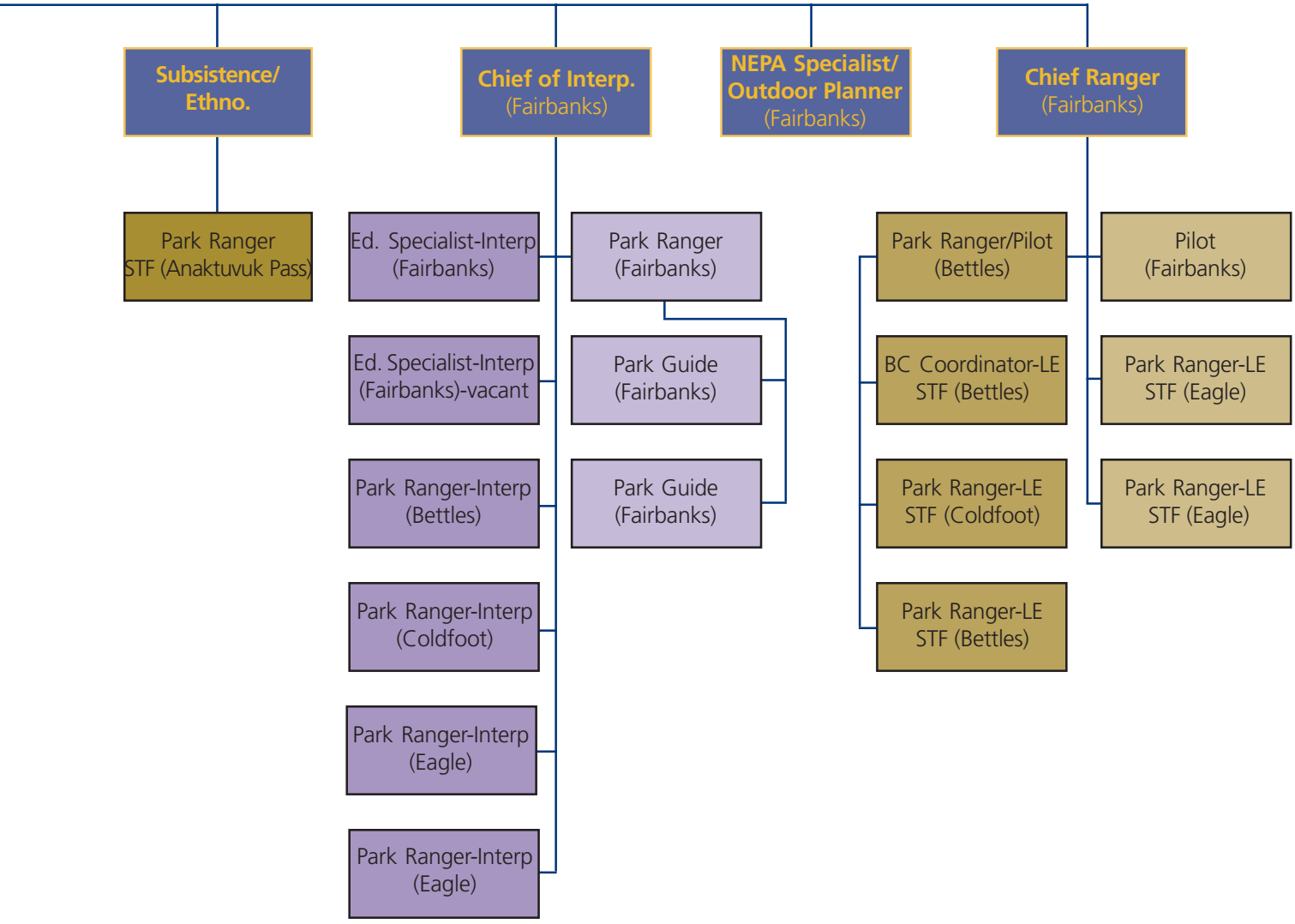



**YUGA All Funding Sources Allocations**
Total = $8,000,393



# *Yukon-Charley Rivers, Gates of the Arctic, Alaska Public Lands Information Center Organization*




Subsistence/ Ethno.
Park Ranger STF (Anaktuvuk Pass)
Chief of Interp. (Fairbanks)
Ed. Specialist-Interp (Fairbanks)
Park Ranger (Fairbanks)
Ed. Specialist-Interp (Fairbanks)-vacant
Park Guide (Fairbanks)
Park Ranger-Interp (Bettles)
Park Guide (Fairbanks)
Park Ranger-Interp (Coldfoot)
Park Ranger-Interp (Eagle)
Park Ranger-Interp (Eagle)
NEPA Specialist/ Outdoor Planner (Fairbanks)
Chief Ranger (Fairbanks)
Park Ranger/Pilot (Bettles)
Pilot (Fairbanks)
BC Coordinator-LE STF (Bettles)
Park Ranger-LE STF (Eagle)
Park Ranger-LE STF (Coldfoot)
Park Ranger-LE STF (Eagle)
Park Ranger-LE STF (Bettles)

Sled dogs rest outside Slaven's Roadhouse on the banks of the Yukon River during the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race that runs through Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve each February.

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